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SUBJECT: ACEH: SLOW VOTE COUNTING FEEDS COMPLAINTS AND INSTABILITY

Reftel: A) JAKARTA 0654 B) JAKARTA 0657

¶1. Summary. While election results in Aceh are being tabulated as quickly as in other provinces, the stakes and tension level is much higher given the expected victory of the Aceh Party (PA) at the provincial parliament (DPRA) level and in a majority of district councils (DPRK). The past week has seen a large mysterious fire, district-level demands for a revote, and several protests outside Election Monitoring Bodies (PANWASLU). Still, Aceh remains peaceful 10 days after elections and the election appears to have been free and fair. End Summary.
Slow Counting

¶2. While the April 9 Legislative Elections in Aceh concluded peacefully (reftels A and B), sluggish tallying of results have created uncertainty and room for noisy complaints by parties unhappy with their performance. As of the morning of April 17 more than 264,000 DPR-RI and 330,000 DPRA ballots had been counted in Aceh, from an election-day estimate of over 2 million votes cast. While the rate of progress is not out of line with national rates, (less than 11 million votes, out of perhaps 120 million total votes, have been counted nationwide according to National Election Commission (KPU) website data from April 17) the number of complaints about electoral violations is increasing rapidly. Although it is not yet possible to properly forecast results, that fact has not stopped parties, particularly the local Aceh Party (PA), from making outrageous claims about its electoral success. Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, the Aceh Party continues to assert that it won between 75% and 90% of the vote. In the absence of solid data, PA's claims are being accepted as correct by some observers and at the grass roots level.

¶3. Early estimates based on the ongoing tabulation of the votes cast show the Aceh Party in the lead for seats in the 69-member DPRA with 38% of the votes for the DPRA ballot. The Democratic Party (PD) is second with 13.74% of the vote, the Justice and Welfare Party (PKS) third with 6.37% of the vote and the Golkar Party fourth with 5.72%. The ballot for the national parliament (in which only national parties participated) shows PD in the lead with 41.13% and PKS second with 10.56%, followed by the National Mandate Party (PAN) at 8.67%, and Golkar with 7.18%.
Post Election Troubles

¶5. The most serious incident of post-election violence was an April 13 fire which destroyed 22 wooden shop houses in the Simpang Balik area of Bener Meriah District. According to media reports, Aceh Governor Irwandi Yusuf called this a case of post-election intimidation during an April 14 meeting with Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla. Media reports state that while police have

apprehended several suspects, they are not revealing their identities.

¶6. In addition to the suspected arson attack in Bener Meriah, a PANWASLU office in neighboring Central Aceh district was ransacked by unknown assailants on the afternoon of April 12. Also, 21 local and national parties are demanding a revote in Pidie District because of pre-election intimidation. Different groupings of local and national parties in Gayo Luwes, Southwest Aceh, South Aceh, and Singkil Districts, and the cities of Lhokseumawe, Langsa, and Subussalam have also called for a revote. In most cases the parties cite PA intimidation against voters and party poll watchers as the reason to demand a revote, though in some cases parties argue that deficiencies in voter rolls and problems with ballots were serious enough to throw the election's validity into question.

¶7. PA is not party to any of these complaints and KPA Spokesperson Ibrahim KBS (PA is closely associated with ex-GAM successor organization KPA and many of its candidates are KPA members) has asked publicly for all parties to respect the results of the April 9 vote.

HUME